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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The State. Its History and Development Viewed Sociologically.* By FRANZ OPPENHEIMER. Authorized translation by John M. Gittermann. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, n. d. Pp. 302.)

Just why this work should receive the honor of a translation into English, when many more important books remain untranslated, is not apparent. In his preface the translator, after giving some account of his author's previous works, suggests that he has acquired a great following in the German universities. That may be so, but a cynic might say that the present work goes far in explaining why Dr. Oppenheimer is still a "*Privat-Dozent*," although his first ambitious work, "*Die Siedlungsgenossenschaft*," appeared nearly eighteen years ago.

The main thesis of the present work is that there are two ways of acquiring the world's goods, to-wit: by economic or by political means, and that hitherto most people have preferred the latter method of becoming rich. The instrument of accomplishing this is the state; and it does so by enabling the stronger to appropriate to themselves the proceeds of other people's labor, principally through the institution of private ownership of land. According to the author, history teaches that the origin of every state is found in the subjection of some peaceable community living contentedly without politics, by some warlike neighbor tribe. The conquerors become the ruling class and continue to amass wealth by politics, while the subject tribe keeps on toiling and turning its products over to its rulers. Obviously there are some states which we know to have started in a different manner, for instance the United States. That, however, cannot hurt the author's theory. In this country also we have the ruling and the subject class; only, the subject class here hurries to take its proper position in the political scheme by immigrating. The author fails to explain why these teeming millions are so anxious to become the American subject class. It reminds one of the fable regarding the spider and the fly. At any rate, all states until this day have been "class states." Progress is in the direction of substituting economic for political action, until the latter has disappeared, and with it

of course the state. The nearest approach to that consummation the author finds in New Zealand.

If the state in every case has been formed by the subjugation of a weaker to a stronger tribe, it follows that there must be a long development of mankind towards civilization, before the state was heard of. For low savages do not subjugate their enemies—they kill them, if they can. In other words, the author narrows the meaning of “state” sufficiently to exclude everything that was done by human societies until the condition arrives which he needs for his thesis, and he is certain that sooner or later these conditions must be met, for history is of course filled with examples of conquest and subjugation. Having thus made a definition (in effect, for he does not trouble to give a formal definition of “state”) suitable for his preconceived theory he goes on with his argument by substituting whenever convenient the concept “government” for that of “state.” For this fault he should not be judged too harshly, for it is a very common vice of continental writers. This confusion is perhaps accountable also for the notion that human societies are without the state, and do not use political means to promote their ends, until some foreign tribe has succeeded in imposing its own dominion over them. The author recognizes no state, till he can discover some government with a fairly elaborate machinery of officials, soldiers and the like. All this in a work professing to explain the nature of the state is of course a begging of the question.

The ultimate goal of social development, according to Dr. Oppenheimer, is the abolition of the state and the substitution of something the translator calls “freemen’s citizenship.” The reviewer is not in possession of the original, but perhaps the German is something like “*Freibürgerschaft*.” In this happy condition people will never act according to any but economic methods, and every kind of compulsion, such as we associate with the state, will have disappeared. One of the reasons why there will be no compulsion is that everybody will have all the land he needs to support himself—if some stubborn owner will not give the laborer all he asks, why the laborer will turn his back on him and go upon the land. According to a remarkable calculation on pages 11 to 13, there is no scarcity of land. Even in densely populated Germany there is enough to give each family twenty acres; and one-third of the land surface of the globe would give each family of five in the world eighteen and a half acres! It is rather surprising that the author finds an approximation to his ideal of stateless society in New Zealand, where according to most of the information we get the state is active even in matters it

usually leaves alone, such as compulsory arbitration of labor disputes and the like. Possibly he has in view only the supposed fact that there are no developed class distinctions in the antipodean islands, and consequently there can be no "class state."

The work is not badly translated, as translations go. It might very well serve the purposes of syndicalists or members of the I. W. W. who desire to adopt a "scientific" foundation for their ideas. For it is not a whit more fanciful or wrongheaded than other writings of the anarchist school.

ERNEST BRUNCKEN.

*Le socialisme municipal en Angleterre.* Par RAYMOND BOVERAT.  
(Paris: Rousseau, 2d edition, 1912. Pp. xvi, 647.)

The first edition of M. Boverat's monograph on English municipal socialism appeared in 1908. Since that date the public ownership movement has been making headway in France, and the author has deemed it a patriotic duty to bring his book once more to the attention of his countrymen in order, as he tells us, that they may learn prudence from the administrative follies of their neighbors across the Channel. This second edition, however, is nothing more than a reprint; there is no presentation of new facts and no amendment of old conclusions.

M. Boverat divides his study into three parts. The first, which takes up more than half the book, deals with the history and actual exploitation of English municipal services, including not only water supply, lighting, transportation and telephone service, but workingmen's dwellings, baths and washhouses, abattoirs, markets and cemeteries. The second discusses the policy of the city towards its employees, and the third treats of local finance in its relation to municipal trading.

Now the question whether the English boroughs have, on the whole, gained any considerable balance of advantage from their numerous experiments in the domain of public operation is one which certainly affords fair ground for honest differences of opinion. This, however, is not M. Boverat's attitude. To his mind the evidence is all on the one side, and his verdict accordingly carries no recommendation of leniency towards those who think otherwise. Municipal trading he regards as a flat failure everywhere and in all its branches. Neither in its economic, social or political results has it demonstrated anything other than "the complete incapacity of the state and its municipalities in commercial undertakings."